

## HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

### MINUTES OF MEETING

February 6, 2017

Members Present: Shawn Farrell, Allison Jenkins, Jeff Hubbard, Scott Maddern (Chairman), and Bill Wilson.

Town Manager: Russ Stevens (Acting Town Manager)

This meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm

#### **Announcements**

Scott Maddern described the current Board openings: Planning Board two Associate Members and one CPC member at large member. The Citizens' Fire Academy would start March 30, 2017 and would meet on Thursday nights until May 18, 2017. Volunteers were needed for the Town Hall Building Committee.

#### **Public Comment**

#### **Chairman/Selectmen Reports**

Jeff Hubbard said the FinCom had met with Tom Catalano (CPA), who presented an overview of their charge and projects. Mr. Catalano had described the economics of the CPA and challenges moving forward now that other towns had joined. The new match numbers might not be due until October. Members of the CPA were in the process of analyzing whether or not to approach the Town to go to a 3% match but because of unknown factors at this point in town, it didn't make sense to move that forward. The Budget Calendar, Warrant process and Annual Report were discussed with the FinCom.

Bill Wilson talked about the School Committee receiving Bill Shields, who discussed Longmeadow and if the school's potential interest in purchasing the land. The School Committee reportedly talked about the budget and out of district costs. There were 37 students to be placed out of district at a cost of \$87,000 per child or \$3.2M. According to Mr. Wilson, the Committee wondered if they should enhance the program and keep the students in house as out of district costs were growing at a non-sustainable 35%. The Committee further discussed the playground at Buker, the Master Plan, and capital improvements. After Town Meeting, the goal was to regroup and discuss apportionment and look at the Regional Agreement, especially in consideration of Hamilton's 84 acres of land devoted to schools compared to Wenham's seven acres.

According to Bill Wilson, the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) had a long discussion about process. One suggestion was to create a subcommittee to look at how to calculate affordable housing and look at other communities. At the AHT meeting, 59 Willow St. was discussed as it was owned by the HDC, a separate legal entity. There was a possibility to build about 20

affordable units or market based commercial properties. The AHT had increased their grant application to the CPC to \$400,000 for affordable housing. The Trust wanted to create a service fund to assist in evaluating affordable properties to cover the cost of soil testing and traffic studies, which would be helpful in an effort to understand specific properties before they were brought forward. Bill Wilson noted that he was not in favor of using tax payers' money to fund a property.

Shawn Farrell reviewed the ConsCom meeting which included the Pingree School wetland delineation, Bass Road negative determination for septic, survey plans at Patton Ridge, and Central Avenue letters to abutters. According to Mr. Farrell, the Planning Board would focus on 227 Willow St, the Willow Street Overlay District By-law revisions, signage, marijuana sales, as well as Phase II By-law changes including Cottage Housing and Commercial Overlay District. The CPC would meet the same week.

Allison went to the apportionment meeting and did research on the PILOT program.

Scott Maddern noted that the Joint Recreation Board was looking forward to the School Committee's decision on the turf field proposal. The COA spring events calendar would be published soon. Mr. Maddern had spoken with Brad Hill to encourage a legislative act or policy to encourage ways to express community needs, such as the Host Community Agreement. Mr. Maddern noted that the League of Women Voters' annual dinner brought forth the concept of engaging high school students to be aware of civic activities. Officially no one had responded to the Patton RFP, which would be due in March.

The Hamilton Housing Authority was part of the PILOT program with 24 original bedrooms in 1987. There was an agreement per house, but other properties may have been added since that date, according to Scott Maddern. Mr. Maddern discussed the Cultural Council Fund, town reports, and the Veteran's pool. Regarding the Bridge St. culvert which had a recent neighbor complaint, the unforeseen problems including the gas easement, had delayed the work until the following Friday. Mr. Maddern noted the trees that had been removed would be replaced.

Russ Stevens gave recognition to Lee Drinkwater as the Endicott College intern to the Police Department. Lieutenant Janes had designed the internship program.

The FY17 financial update was given by Marisa Batista who gave an overview of what the Finance Department had been working on. Work included finalizing the FY16 audit, tax recap of the tax recertification, and water bill projects. According to Ms. Batista, the main focus had been on FY18 finalized department head meetings. There were joint meetings with Wenham to discuss the joint program budgets. The revenues had been posted through the end of December and expenditures were to date. Ms. Batista said she would approach billing for joint programs such as energy manager, DPW bills, recreation and ECO. Ms. Batista needed to finish the FY17

numbers before working on FY18. In FY18 there would be \$25,000 to create policy via a consultant.

### **Consent Agenda**

Approve January 23, 2017 and January 23, 2017 Executive Session minutes.

Motion made by Bill Wilson to approve the Consent Agenda.

Seconded by Jeff Hubbard.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

### **Licenses**

Hamilton House of Pizza and Café Shishco. All the paper work was in and inspections for both were complete.

Motion to approve the Common Victualler's License for the Hamilton House of Pizza was made by Jeff Hubbard.

Seconded by Bill Wilson.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Motion to approve the Common Victualler's License for Café Shishco was made by Jeff Hubbard.

Seconded by Shawn Farrell.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

### **Agenda**

FY16 Audit – Accept and Discuss

There was \$5.7M in the General Fund including OPEB, which needed to be funded by 2038. Discussion ensued regarding the trust fund and the funding through borrowing. There was not a separate trust that had been established and until the trust was established there was a \$20M liability. The existing \$140,000 was in a separate account but could be used for something else as it was not in the specific trust. Scott Maddern suggested putting money away for future liability, leveraging that fund for a higher growth rate, then borrow to protect the Town's future.

The Audit produced a clean report consistent with prior years, but the Management Report had six comments, one of which was informational.

The first comment was regarding water billing and adjustments, which was reported the prior year. The concern was regarding unauthorized adjustments and manually read meters. The auditor recommended changing to automatic, digital reads and supervisory adjustments.

The roadway construction fund was discussed and noted to have a deficit of \$4,000.00. The variance, which was an accounting issue as it was posted to the wrong fund, would be investigated. Free cash would be used to fund the deficit.

Other auditor concerns were due to the Recreation Department and lack of financial policies and procedures. It was noted that policy was easy but procedures were difficult. Risk assessment monitoring was not documented. The program tied into policy and procedures. Cash collections that became decentralized was where theft could occur.

Allison Jenkins discussed the procurement policy and wanted to develop a procurement policy that mirrored Massachusetts General Laws.

Sagamore Hill Conservation Area – Presentation by Chris LaPointe, Essex County Greenbelt. Conservation Restriction Approval.

Chris LaPointe offered an overview of where the project stood. The Trust for Public Land acquired land in Hamilton and Essex as an interim owner. Essex County Greenbelt acquired the CR in Essex, which was recorded. There were six other surrounding landowners who gave CRs. Mr. LaPointe said there were two categories of request. The expectation would be the property would close in March and immediately be open to the public but there would be no parking, signage, or infrastructure. Mr. LaPointe noted parking would need to be accomplished after a Site Plan Review hearing which was held with the Planning Board. Shortly after taking title, parking would be established, trails would be marked, maps made, and kiosks installed to welcome the public. The acquisition would feature 525 acres of new Conservation land in Hamilton, Ipswich, and Essex that connected to another 9,000 acres of Conservation lands via trails.

Chris LaPointe provided four Conservation Restrictions which he asked the Board of Selectmen to approve. The land had been donated by the Pingree, Parker, Thomas, and Wheaton families. The Conservation Restrictions had been approved by the State. The ConsCom had signed them. Greenbelt would own 172 acres in Hamilton and the Town and Department of Conservation would hold the CR.

Of the four donated restrictions, the Wheaton property had a 30 year deed restriction on it. The property was important for public access as it contained a significant stretch of trail. There would be a permanent deeded trail access. The other three properties were entirely in the floodplain of the Miles River but were contiguous from a conservation standpoint, which was critical. From a tax standpoint, the properties were not buildable and there would be no public access in the wetlands. A primary connector was across the Clark property which kept the trail system intact.

Motion to approve all the Conservation Restrictions for the Pingree, Parker, Thomas, and Wheaton properties was made by Jeff Hubbard.

Bill Wilson seconded.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

The Town and the Department of Conservation would hold the restriction on the 172 acres of land owned by Essex County Greenbelt. Scott Maddern said he had not received a copy of the restriction.

Chris LaPointe referred to a small portion of land used as a commercial composting operation, under license with Essex County Greenbelt. There would be fencing, screening and no increase to what currently existed. If in the future, the composting operation infringed on public use, the Town could speak up and change the operations. Essex County Greenbelt would hire someone to hay the fields to keep them open. Bond Counsel was checked and the tax exemption status would not change. A comfort station might be installed and events for fundraising for Essex County Greenbelt would occur. There would be protection for the public to maintain the right to use the property year round. There would need to be Town signage approval except for trail signs.

Chris LaPointe indicated that the bonding process required 30 days, which would not begin until the Board of Selectmen had signed off on the CR. Mr. LaPointe noted that Donna Brewer worked hard on the legality of the two acre composting operation which was a concern of the Town and DCR. Vehicles and equipment customarily used were allowed in the area. There would be no more than two temporary structures of 400 sf in aggregate with screening. The license was for five years and the parking and trails pointed away from the operation. There would be no animal carcasses and the Board of Health had the right to fix any problem.

Haying all open areas included a provision to allow hay fields to become other agriculture uses within the 75 acres that were open, with a farm plan. According to DCR, the fields could be converted to vegetables for nonprofit, educational, or charitable uses.

Motion to approve the joint Hamilton/DCR CR based on the ConsCom approval and the recommendation of Town Counsel and Manager was proposed. Bill Wilson said he was uncomfortable not having read it. The Board agreed to meet at 8:00 am on the following Friday to allow time for the Board to review the document. It was noted that the Town had Title Insurance for the property.

#### Water Bill Abatement Discussion

Russ Stevens had been working with Donna Brewer about water uses, water leakage, and water meter issues. A Crescent Road resident measured 131,000 gallons when they had used 24,000 and 25,000 in prior years. The meter was bad. There were several mechanical issues as it pertained to meter problems. Chief Stevens asked the Board if they wanted to see every abatement request that pertained to a water meter issue or did they want to give authority to the Town Manager or DPW Director who could abate them and issue a quarterly report to the Board.

Russ Stevens said the Town needed a valve and meter replacement program but currently did not have the manpower. Allison Jenkins said she did not have a problem with the abatement and

liked Chief Stevens' idea to allow the Town Manager and DPW Director to abate as long as reporting was a part of it. Bill Wilson agreed.

Motion made to approve the water abatement of \$1,421.21 by Jeff Hubbard

Seconded by Bill Wilson.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

The Board agreed to work on the policies and procedures for water abatement.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant: Schedule Closing for February 21, 2017. Potential Warrant Articles.

The closing of the Warrant would be at the next meeting on. Scott Maddern knew about three citizen petitions. Marc Johnson was proposing a no build zone for the Locust St. and Horseshoe Ln. neighborhood at the rear of the Public Safety building and public school as a result of the AHT meeting. This would create a 100' easement but the Town already owned the property. The current thought was to turn it into a referendum. Bill Shields was proposing the acquisition of Longmeadow fields. Tim Clark was proposing to name the bridge on Bridge St. after his family. There would be the budget, free cash, but no By-laws. The School would speak regarding the apportionment issue.

The Board decided to have a meeting on February 27, 2017. The Warrant hearing would be on March 20, 2017 with the document mailed on March 24, 2017. The Budget was noted as being 1.3% above last year with free cash having been applied to keep the tax rate low.

New Business

Discussion would include apportionment, housing trust service fund, OPEB trust concept, aggregation solar, and policy on policy.

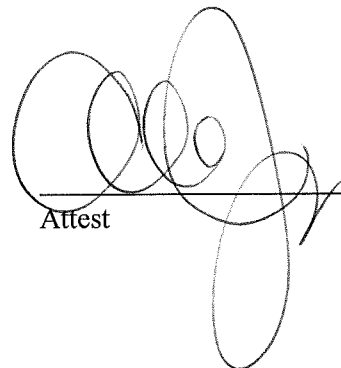
Motion to adjourn at 10:20 was made by Jeff Hubbard.

Seconded by Shawn Farrell

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker  
Marcie Ricker

Attest  Date 4/3/17